



# WHEN ARMOR WAS ART

Exploring Images of Armor in the  
National Gallery of Art Collections

## WEST BUILDING MAIN FLOOR

### Galleries 4, 5, 7, and 9



Andrea del Castagno, *David with the Head of Goliath*, c. 1450/1455  
[Gallery 4](#)

Castagno designed the leather shield for the type of pageant mirrored in Biagio d’Antonio’s painting of a triumph. The victorious David, alert to future threats, personifies the fortitude of the Florentine Republic. The shield would have stirred civic pride when carried through the city, perhaps accompanied by troops in plain field armor, eminent citizens and visitors in blackened parade and tournament gear, and carts reenacting ancient history as depicted in the *Triumph* painting. The standard-bearer’s helmet is in the fantastic *all’antica* style of Verrocchio’s breastplate in the portrait of Giuliano de’ Medici, perhaps made for the occasion of a joust.

#### EXPLORE

- Probably Flemish 16th Century, after a model by Leone Leoni, *Emperor Charles V*, 1550/1568  
[West Sculpture Hall at Gallery 1](#)
- Mino da Fiesole, *Astorgio Manfredi*, 1455 [Gallery 5](#)
- Biagio d’Antonio and Workshop, *The Triumph of Camillus*, c. 1470/1475 [Gallery 7](#)
- Andrea del Verrocchio, *Giuliano de’ Medici*, c. 1475/1478 [Gallery 9](#)

### Galleries 20, 23, 28, 42, and 43



Raphael, *Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1506 [Gallery 20](#)



Titian, *Vincenzo Cappello*, probably c. 1540 [Gallery 23](#)

Raphael’s resolute Saint George is protected by a suit of shining armor. This may be a compliment to the painter’s patron, the duke of Urbino, a soldier of fortune recently awarded a garter of the Order of the Garter. Heroism conferred by armor became a hallmark of Titian’s portraits, such as that of Vincenzo Cappello, a five-term commander of the Venetian fleet. The bravura rendition of the armor’s brilliant surface, fittings, and accessories enhances the figure’s vigor. Seventeenth-century Flemish and Dutch artists, such as Van Dyck and Hanneman, further refined Titian’s model.

#### EXPLORE

- Sodoma, *Saint George and the Dragon*, probably 1518 [Gallery 20](#)
- Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, *Portrait of a Knight*, c. 1525 [Gallery 23](#)
- El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), *Saint Martin and the Beggar*, 1597/1599 [Gallery 28](#)
- Sir Anthony van Dyck, *The Prefect Raffaele Raggi*, c. 1625 [Gallery 42](#)
- Adriaen Hanneman, *Henry, Duke of Gloucester*, c. 1653 [Gallery 43](#)

### Galleries 35, 35A, 37, and 48



Master of the Death of Saint Nicholas of Münster, *Calvary*, c. 1470/1480 [Gallery 35A](#)

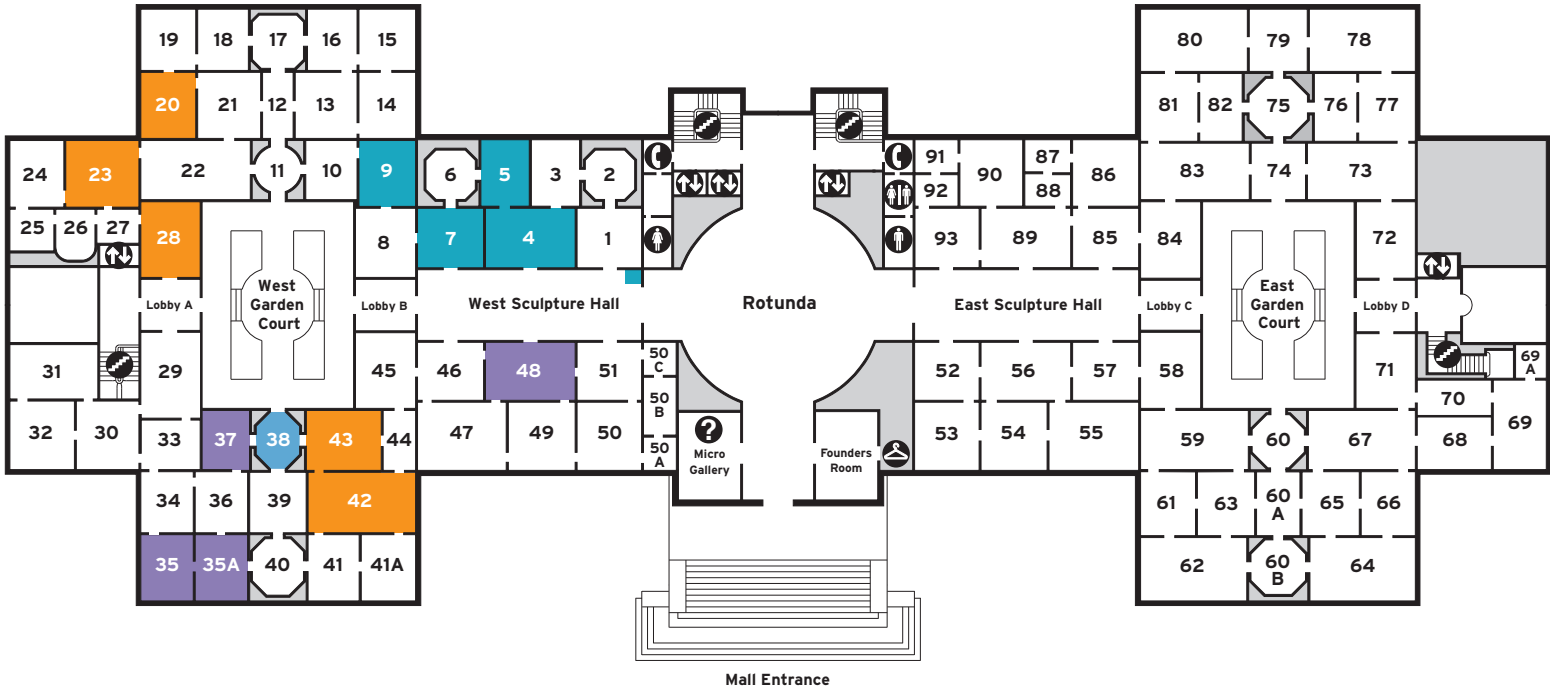
In the German *Calvary*, showing a range of responses to suffering and death, a knight on a white charger appears strikingly impassive. Rigidly encased in armor—a metaphor for his duty as the standard-bearer of pagan Rome—he stares at Christ but sees nothing. In contrast, Valentin de Boulogne’s painting depicts contemporary Roman low-life, unemployed mercenary soldiers who advertise their availability by donning their armor and livery piecemeal, roll dice, and cheat a foolish dandy at cards.



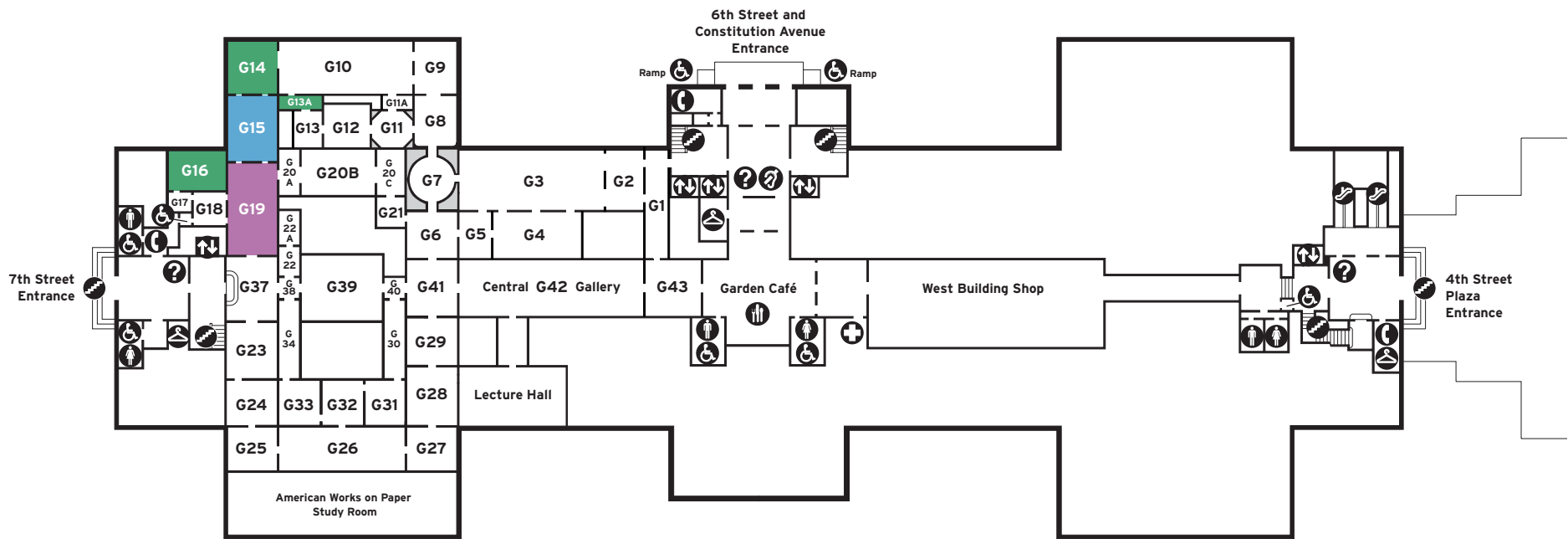
Valentin de Boulogne, *Soldiers Playing Cards and Dice (The Cheats)*, c. 1620/1622 [Gallery 37](#)

#### EXPLORE

- Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Crucifixion with the Converted Centurion*, 1536 [Gallery 35](#)
- Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altar, *The Baptism of Christ*, c. 1485/1500 [Gallery 35A](#)







# WEST BUILDING GROUND FLOOR

## Gallery G19



Giovanni Paolo Negroli, *Helmet (Burgonet) in the Form of a Dolphin Mask*, 1540/1545 [Gallery G19](#)

Made for ceremonial use in the best armor workshop in Italy, Giovanni Paolo Negroli’s fierce dolphinlike mask with a rippled scaly snout suggests ferocious power. Fantastic hybrid creatures and foliage decorate the bowl and earpieces of such sumptuous sixteenth-century helmets. The lighter-weight helmet below, probably made by another Milanese workshop, is curiously constructed with a lion muzzle visor that rotates upward into the gilded and silvered bowl. Hinged cheek flaps are riveted to the outside. The helmet may have been intended for theatrical use.



Probably Milanese 16th Century, *The Morosini Helmet* (visored burgonet), probably 1550/1560 [Gallery G19](#)

### EXPLORE

Netherlandish 16th Century, *The Triumph of Christ* (“*The Mazarin Tapestry*”), c. 1500 [Gallery G19](#)

## Galleries G13A, G14, and G16



Pisanello, *Domenico Novello Malatesta*, 1418–1465, *Lord of Cesena 1429* [reverse], c. 1445 [Gallery G16](#)

On the reverse of his medal, Pisanello represents Domenico Novello Malatesta, lord of Cesena and Cervia, as a man of arms in action in full field armor and closed helmet. He is shown kneeling and embracing a crucifix, commemorating his narrow escape from Milanese troops after he vowed to dedicate a hospital to the Holy Cross in Cesena. Guillaume Dupré’s medal of Henry IV, king of France, with his second wife, Marie de’ Medici, celebrates the second birthday of a long-desired heir. Henry wears splendidly chiseled armor with the sash of a commander, and the insignia of the preeminent French royal Order of the Holy Spirit.



Guillaume Dupré, *Henri IV, King of France, and Marie de’ Medici*, 1603 [Gallery G13A](#)

### EXPLORE

Alessandro Vittoria, *A Gentleman of the Zorzi Family*, c. 1570/1580 [Gallery G14](#)

German or Austrian 16th Century, *Ferdinand I*, 1503–1564, *Archduke of Austria 1519, Emperor 1556* [obverse], 1541 [Gallery G16](#)

Pompeo Leoni, *Ercole II d’Este*, 1508–1559, *4th Duke of Ferrara 1534* [obverse], 1554 [Gallery G16](#)

## Galleries 38 (Main Floor) and G15



English 14th or 15th Century, *Saint George and the Dragon*, 1370/1420 [Gallery 38](#) [\(see main floor map\)](#)

The English painted alabaster Saint George wears armor fashionable during the fourteenth century. The chain mail attached to his open-faced helmet was gilded. Popular across Europe as the archetypal Christian warrior, George became the patron saint of England. His insignia, a red cross on a white ground, was adopted by the crusaders. Vincenzo Onofri’s painted terracotta bust could portray a warrior saint or a young man. Late fifteenth-century Italian antique-style costume armor commonly included lion mask pauldrons (shoulder guards) and a screaming grotesque visage on the breastplate to ward off evil.



Vincenzo Onofri, *A Man in Armor*, c. 1500 [Gallery G15](#)

This brochure was written by independent scholar Rosamand Mack, and produced by the publishing office and the department of academic programs, National Gallery of Art.

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